

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CHILE: ITS CONVENTIONAL THREATS

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## ABSTRACT

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This paper identifies the factors of friction that subsist between Chile and its neighbors of the Southern Cone of South America. These factors form the traditional and untraditional threats that can lead to crisis and motivate the use of military force. The paper then develops a set of strategic recommendations for improving sub-regional security and cooperation, all within the framework of Chilean national interest.



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## CHILE: ITS CONVENTIONAL THREATS

No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.

- Carl von Clausewitz<sup>1</sup>

War is as old as human history. According to Hobbes, war “is innate to the human being.” Initially, humans fought simply for survival. Then they fought more collectively to defend their territory and the rights of their claims. Eventually they fought to gain independence from other people, or for their freedom, or to preserve their religious beliefs or political convictions. Various motives have led to contemporary warfare, which has evolved into a devastating phenomenon. Despite its increasing destructiveness and lethality, warfare in various forms persists globally, offering constant ominous evidence of its universality.

As the technology for making war becomes more lethal, attitudes toward war seem to be changing. Likewise, more sophisticated strategic concepts are evolving, such as asymmetric warfare, emerging threats, deterrence, containment, and arms limitations. These newer concepts seem to have been designed in part to counter the devastating potential of weapons of mass destruction devised to wage chemical, biological, and nuclear wars. Likewise, national security strategies now include tenets addressing both conventional and non-conventional warfare.

Currently the South American Cone—especially Chile and its bordering neighbors—seems mostly removed from the threat of major conflicts or traditional war. However, in order to protect their vital interests, all states must consider the prospects of going to war, despite the absence of immediate threats. Strategic policies are designed to protect national interests, which may be classified along a scale ranging from vital to peripheral<sup>2</sup>. Further, as political, cultural, and economic circumstances change, national interests also alter in a dynamic process. In a given region, changing national interests may portend conflicts among the region's nations. In the South American Cone, both Peru and Argentina have resorted to military force in the past 25 years. Yet Chile has not engaged in external conflict for almost 130 years.

Global commerce is currently influencing regional affairs, and the dynamics of the regional economy seem to be transcending narrower national interests. Nonetheless, the region's nations retain a monopoly on military force. Whereas globalization may provide a buffer against

warfare, the region's nations will continue to protect their interests, which could lead to armed conflict.

This SRP offers the perspective of a Chilean Army officer on the current and emerging threats to his nation's interest. Effective identification of threats enables national leaders to eliminate or reduce the threats, thereby avoiding use of military force to protect vital interests.

## **EMERGING THREATS**

Defense policy is based on perceptions of threats to a nation's interests. Threats are identified as real or perceived actions of a potential adversary, acting deliberately or unconsciously, that can negatively affect the threatened nation<sup>3</sup>. Threats are classified as conventional and non-conventional. Conventional threats are menacing actions or potential actions of a clearly identified adversarial state. Such threats are first countered through diplomacy; if diplomatic efforts fail, threats may then be countered by military force as a last resort. So, conventional threats affect relations among nation-states. These threats are often related to territorial disputes or issues of sovereignty. They may originate externally or internally.

On the other hand, non-conventional threats do not emanate from a clearly identifiable source. They may jeopardize national institutions and infrastructure; they may weaken a nation's economic development. Indeed they may be self-generated, fueled by indigenous grievances, poverty, or insurrection. They may be supported by external sources. They may also explode into traditional conflict, either civil war or war with sponsoring states<sup>4</sup>.

The following analysis of threats to Chile focuses largely on conventional threats. A threat analysis should begin with a candid assessment of the nation's vulnerabilities. The most serious threats are aimed at the nation's weakest points. Failure to identify weaknesses only increases the potential of threats to wreak serious damage. Indeed the 9/11 attack on the world's sole superpower triggered global fears of terrorist attacks. If the United States was so vulnerable, then all countries should fear such devastation. People and nations around the world then quickly acknowledged the threat of terrorism. However, this analysis does not address this new global security phenomenon. Rather, it focuses on the traditional, historic threats in the South American Cone from a Chilean perspective-while acknowledging the overarching threat of global terrorism.

As do most Latin American countries, Chile faces a number of asymmetric threats. If any one of them is not sufficiently addressed by other means, then Chile may need to use military or police force to counter them:

- Illicit trafficking
- Transnational terrorism
- Massive migrations
- Violence and organized crime
- Ethnic problems
- Environmental pollution

#### ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

Chile is geographically located in a strategic drug-trafficking corridor. Illegal narcotics grown and processed in Bolivia and Peru are smuggled in large quantities through Chile and on to Europe and North America, particularly the United States. Chile attempts to disrupt this illegal traffic through its police force, rather than using its armed forces.

However, Chile's efforts to interdict drug traffic have led to problems with its Bolivian neighbor. Indigenous Bolivians profit greatly from their coca crops. Because of the enormous profits from drug trafficking, Bolivian traffickers influence Bolivian politics and thereby resist Chilean intrusion into their profitable business. Much of the coca crop is grown in the La Paz region and the Santa Cruz lowlands. La Paz marks a deep geographic divide between Chile and Bolivia; La Paz also marks a deep social, economic, and ethnic divide with the Bolivian government – a division sharpened by legitimate historic grievances. So indigenous coca growers regard interference in their agrarian commerce as one more intrusion into their affairs and as a blow to their economic well-being. So they expect their Bolivian government to oppose Chilean efforts to disrupt their drug trade. Indeed they regard coca production as a cultural right, since coca is instrumental in their rituals. It is currently, of course, also a source of unheard-of wealth. When Chile interferes with this highly profitable agrarian industry, Chile also inadvertently intrudes into a sensitive, volatile domestic issue in neighboring Bolivia

#### TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

There is some transnational terrorism in the South American Cone, but it has diminished in recent years. Emerging democracy in Chile has enabled formerly disaffected parties, inclined previously to terroristic activities, to act within newly established institutions, thereby neutralizing the terrorist threat. Currently delinquent gangs, motivated primarily by poverty and unemployment, provide a modicum of internal tension. Further, Peru's arrest of Abimael Guzman (of the Tupac Amaru terrorist group) and other terrorist leaders has reduced the transnational threat. However, the Sendero Luminoso terrorist group has begun using the FARC tactic of exchanging protection of narcotraffickers for funding, thereby linking terrorism

and trafficking as a combined threat – and sustaining the transnational threat. Peru's preoccupation with the Guzman group has distracted the government from dismantling the Sendero Luminoso. Like Chile, Bolivia is not immediately threatened by transnational terrorists, although Peruvian elements of FARC and MRTA have sought refuge in Bolivia.

The potential of terrorist attacks looms over the region, however, because of the devastation suffered in Argentina from a terrorist attack on the Israelite Mutual Association. Further, South American nations cannot overlook the terrorist activities in the triple borders region shared by Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina – activities that have been linked to Al Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Indeed the threat of global terrorism looms over the South American continent. Yet this threat is so universal, so non-specific that it cannot be narrowed into a specific national threat.

## MIGRATIONS

Disparity among the economies of the region's nations is precipitating destabilizing migrations of people seeking employment and a better standard of living. Bolivians, Peruvians, and Argentineans are seeking a better life in Chile. This influx is disrupting the Chilean labor market and stressing the social fabric of the nation. A demographic nucleus of aliens presents social, cultural, and economic challenges to the Chilean government and arouses xenophobic hostilities among affected Chilean citizens.

## VIOLENCE AND ORGANIZED CRIME

The World Health Organization has identified Latin America as the world's most violent region, based on the number of murders per capita<sup>5</sup>. Fostered in part by organized crime, this violence includes increasing assaults and kidnappings. Because law enforcement officials are failing to curb this violence, ordinary citizens are fearful, angry, and distressed. The violence is caused by insurgents, gangs, drug dealers, urban and suburban miscreants, labor activists, and terrorists. Governmental failure to curb it comes in part from corruption, from criminal penetration of law enforcement agencies, and from incompetence. Internal violence could lead to a total or partial collapse of the state. This violence is also a symptom of related threats of transnational terrorism, illicit trafficking, and massive migrations. In the final analysis, destabilizing threats are deeply interrelated. So successful countering of any of them can alleviate all of them. Unless the government can establish a monopoly on force, it cannot eradicate such violence – or even reduce it to an acceptable level.

## **ETHNIC PROBLEMS**

South American countries have significant indigenous populations. Their political activities tend to disrupt regional stability—sometimes to the extent of overthrowing established governments. Indigenous groups in Bolivia and Peru currently exert significant pressure on their governments. This source of regional instability constitutes a threat to all nations of the region, including Chile. The collapse of a neighboring government can radically alter the diplomatic landscape. Further, indigenous unrest easily crosses political boundaries.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION**

Regional modernization, including urbanization, presents a host of environmental issues. Concentrated populations, emerging industries, mining, and generation of electricity all can adversely affect the environment, especially by polluting the atmosphere and water. Regional environmental regulatory efforts have lagged behind problematic modern development, directly affecting agriculture and river basins and jeopardizing biodiversity. Destruction of the region's environment constitutes a grave non-conventional threat to the nations of the region, including Chile.

## **SOURCES OF CONVENTIONAL CONFLICTS**

Although Chile's threats can best be addressed through regional actions, the political, economic, social, environmental, and military history of the region reveal that armed conflict among the region's nations could erupt.

## **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS**

The Cone nations have occasionally acted on expansionist ambitions, triggering territorial disputes. National leaders are therefore wary of their neighbors' technological advances and arms acquisitions. Following their independence from Spain, the region's nations (Chile, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina) engaged in various wars and conflicts to settle territorial disputes. Chile's current boundaries were established through terrestrial and maritime pacts sanctioned by international law.

National leaders in the region occasionally resort to provoking disputes with neighboring countries as a means of distracting citizens from internal problems. In 1978, Argentina created furor over maritime rights in the Beagle Canal for just such reasons. Likewise, when Bolivian president Carlos Mesa assumed power, he quickly initiated a territorial dispute regarding sovereignty of a portion of Chile's seacoast. Thus internal issues in the region's nations can lead to conflict – and possible warfare– between nations in the region.

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

Globalization has led to both increasing cooperation and to intensified competition. The region's nations compete aggressively for markets, for capital investments, and for technological advantages. This competition can become hostile, especially when a given player appears to be seeking unfair advantage by breaking the rules of the game.

## SOCIAL FACTORS

Some nations in the region use their educational system to indoctrinate their young people toward hostility and hatred of citizens of other nations in the region. For example, young Peruvians are taught that Chileans are usurpers, invaders, and expansionists. Thus the educational systems perpetuate historical grievances and conflicts, thereby sustaining threats of armed conflict among the region's nations.

## MILITARY FACTORS

For the most part, regional political leaders insist on maintaining military strength at considerable expense in order to maintain the perception of strength, but also to use force externally to divert attention from internal problems.

The foregoing threat analysis reveals that all of the threats confronting Chile are indeed regional and transnational. Such complex threats cannot be effectively countered by a given nation's armed forces. Indeed they can best be addressed through cooperative, coordinated regional actions.

## **CHILE'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS**

The greatest source of regional conflict in the South American Cone has been post-colonial border disputes. By the end of the nineteenth century, these disputes had been largely settled through treaties and accepted guidelines for settling new disputes. Chile's victory in the Pacific War in 1882 gave the country regional and global prestige. From 1883 to 1920, Chile was a model of post-colonial development. Its military victories, its political stability, its resilient economy, its effective diplomacy were highly regarded internationally, especially in Europe. Even so, Chile was not so admired by its South American neighbors. Despite regional suspicions regarding Chile, Chile remains the leading South American nation in development and political stability. As such, Chilean affairs and Chilean well-being affect the entire region. Chile now seeks to contribute to a new world order, characterized by increasing globalization. Accordingly, Chile desires to reduce historic tensions with its neighbors and to expand regional stability and prosperity. Chile advocates a regional approach to security, especially since the

principal threats to Chile's security can best be addressed through cooperative regional efforts. From a troubled regional past can come a brighter regional future. Chile is committed to such a desirable prospect.

#### CHILE AND ARGENTINA

Chile and Argentina have one of the longest borders in the world between only two countries. The boundaries of China, Brazil, and Russia are longer, but they are multinational ones. Perhaps the border that separates the United States from Canada is like ours. This boundary extends for more than 4.000 kilometers of twists and turns through the Andes Mountains, beginning as 22° 49'E and ending in the southern lands.

No bullet has ever been fired in anger across this long boundary. Yet many tensions have permeated relations between the two nations. Always a high priority of the nation's foreign ministers has been resolving these on-going tensions. Indeed the incredible length of this common border virtually guarantees bilateral disputes. It is a tribute to both nations' good will and diplomacy that never has a dispute erupted into armed conflict.

Indeed it has taken over a century to finally determine the Chilean-Argentinean border. Boundary disputes reached critical stages in 1871, 1898, 1902, and as recently as 1977 and 1978. European foreign ministers with strong interest and influence in Latin America have intervened to resolve these disputes. In 1978, both nations' military forces were mobilized in response to each country's conflicting claims of maritime rights in the Beagle Canal.

To resolve this crisis, Chile unilaterally appealed to Great Britain to invoke the 1881 Treaty and the 1902 arbitration agreement. But on 25 January 1978, Argentina declared the 1902 agreement null and void, heightening tensions fostered by Argentina's bellicose ruling military junta. Chile, seeking to avoid seemingly inevitable armed conflict, then sought Pope John Paul II's intercession, knowing that papal influence is great in both countries. This intercession served to cool the militant ardor on both sides. On 8 January 1979, under the Agreement of Montevideo, the two nations agreed to withdraw their military forces from the disputed zone, and Argentina revoked its declaration of war. The dispute was formally resolved by means of a 29 November 1984 Peace Treaty, which was ratified on 2 May 1985. However, 24 specific boundary disputes remained unresolved.

In a 1991 meeting, Presidents Patricio Aylwin of Chile and Carlos Menem of Argentina resolved 23 of the outstanding boundary disputes. Chile's parliament will soon consider a resolution to the final dispute, countering in Campo de Hielo. Argentinean Parliament must discuss this resolution and give its approbation. When this final issue is resolved, the final



border between Chile and Argentina will have been determined to the satisfaction of both nations. Yet there are conflicting claims in American Antarctica; however, Antarctica's international status, established in the Treaty of 1959, may obviate the conflicting Chilean-Argentinean claims.

Resolution of border disputes has led to improved overall relations between the two countries. International commerce has increased. The 1984 Treaty of Peace and Friendship has led to increased trust and less suspicion of secret weapons and surprise attacks. Mutual trust has served to dispel inclinations to acquire more military capabilities.

Indeed Chile and Argentina are now sharing their military capabilities to provide a more secure region. Chile has agreed to match Argentina's military budget, thereby avoiding an arms race in the region. There is an on-going exchange of military personnel between the two countries; both countries are accepting cadets from their neighboring country into their service academics. Military personnel from both countries are training jointly to serve in peace operations. The two militaries are planning for greater cooperation and collaboration.

Despite all this progress toward bilateral peace, the foreign ministers of Chile and Argentina continue to address minor disputes. And ideal goal, peace is never assured. Yet working for peace seems far more desirable than eternally preparing for war.

#### CHILE AND BOLIVIA

Not all of Chile's border disputes have been with Argentina. Chile has had a number of border conflicts with its northern neighbors Peru and Bolivia. Chile's northern frontiers with Bolivia were established by treaties in 1884 and 1904, with Peru by treaties in 1883 and 1929. However, these treaties were not effectively implemented, so the disputes continued. Indeed inadequate surveys and ignorance of the topography of the frontier made it impossible to precisely identify boundaries. The common history and shared geography of the three countries necessitate tri-lateral negotiations over many issues; a resolution that satisfies two of the three may be entirely unacceptable to the third.

Before provoking the Pacific War in 1879, Bolivia concluded a secret treaty with Peru in 1873, making them allies in the conflict with Chile. When they lost the war, they lost territories to Chile. To this day, they seek to regain this lost territory. Only skillful diplomacy and successful negotiations have prevented a renewal of this ancient war.

The 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship settled border disputes with Bolivia and resolved other issues. Chile agreed to grant Bolivia access to the Arica-La Paz railway. Bolivia

thus acquired access to the Pacific Ocean, which improved its national unity and fostered economic development.

The most pressing current dispute centers on Bolivia's maritime claims. Theoretically, such disputes were either resolved by the 1904 treaty or should be settled by its mechanisms. For example, the 1904 treaty led to the 1955 bilateral Economic Complementary Treaty and agreement on the 1951 Pipeline of Bolivian fiscal oilfield of Sicasica, which had serious implications for geopolitical issues and Chile's national security.

Despite this creative diplomacy, Bolivia continues to harbor hostile, vindictive attitudes toward Chile. For example, Bolivia resents Chile's access to water rights from the Lauca River, which Chile has used to irrigate the Azapa valley since 1939. This dispute remains unresolved. Bolivia still claims Chile must have permission to use this water<sup>6</sup>. When Chilean President Jorge Alessandri ordered the sluice gates opened on 14 April 1962, the Bolivian government broke off diplomatic relations with Chile.

At the "Embrace of Charana" conference in 1975, Bolivian President Hugo Banzer requested that Chilean President Augusto Pinochet grant Bolivia another sovereign corridor to the Pacific Ocean. But according to the 1929 Treaty of Lima, Peru had to concur with such an agreement. So Peru responded with a proposed tripartite System of Condominium, which would have granted tri-national administration of the seaport of Arica. Of course, this arrangement would violate Chile's territorial contiguity and sovereignty in Arica, jeopardizing the security of northern Chile. Likewise, Chile could not overlook Peru's long-standing ambition of recovering Arica. This issue destroyed the Charana negotiations and prompted Bolivia to once more break off diplomatic relations with Chile in 1978.

Nonetheless, commercial relations between Bolivia and Chile led to a bilateral Agreement of Economic Complementation on 6 April 1993 in Santa Cruz. This agreement established protocols on tourism, protection and promotion of investments, enhancement of commerce, environmental protection, and energy sharing. This limited agreement represents a start toward a regional free trade accord.

In its efforts to improve its regional status, Bolivia is seeking to serve as an intermediary between Brazil and Chile to facilitate Brazilian export trade through Chilean ports on the Pacific Ocean. Bolivia is seeking international support to develop its inter-oceanic corridors to facilitate transport of Brazilian goods, especially agricultural products, to the Pacific.

Bolivia also has the second largest reserve of natural gas in South America – approximately 47 trillion cubic feet. So Bolivia is seeking to trade this natural wealth for other needed resources. Since the majority of these reserves are located in southern Bolivia, they can

be more easily and cheaply exported through Chile than through Peru. Yet political pressures in Bolivia tend to favor use of Peruvian ports. So Bolivian President Mesa called for a referendum in 2004 to let his people decide on which ports to use. They decided to use Peruvian ports. However, the decision is not yet final, so there is some chance that Bolivian authorities will yield to economic reality, rather than popular hostility toward Chile.

In order to acquire this commerce, Chile is guaranteeing the security of the gas industry. With the continent's strongest military force, Chile can make good on its guarantee, which includes protection of gas plants and of the safe delivery of raw materials essential to the industry.

Of all the thorny issues between Chile and Bolivia, the overriding issue is Bolivia's efforts to acquire direct access to the Pacific. Maritime reintegration is the permanent objective of Bolivian foreign policy. Bolivia regards this as a bilateral issue with Chile, but claims it can be settled only trilaterally or multilaterally. Indeed the current Bolivian administration claims international support for Bolivian maritime claims on the centennial of the Bolivian maritime cause.

Bolivian President Carlos Mesa addressed the United Nations in September 2004, concluding his speech with a passionate description of Bolivia's land-locked isolation. He claimed Bolivia's situation acted as a "stone in a shoe" regarding efforts to integrate Latin America economically and politically. He further claimed Bolivia's development is stymied by the situation. He vowed that Bolivia will never relent in its efforts to reclaim its seacoast: "Bolivia was born as an independent country with a coast on the Pacific Ocean". He cited moral, historical, political, and economic rationale for restoring Bolivia's seacoast. He granted that his nation and Chile share a common destiny, but he insisted that Bolivia cannot remain cloistered and isolated.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Limits, Bolivian-Chilean relations are very tense. While Bolivia seeks international support for relief, Chile remains open to discussions of the issue of maritime rights, which it regards as a bilateral dispute. Further, Chile wants both parties to abide by the treaty, and Chile is unwilling to yield sovereignty as part of any settlement. What remains is an impasse.

#### CHILE AND PERU

Chile has had on-going border disputes and other disagreements with Peru, similar to Chile's issues with Bolivia. The 1929 Treaty of Peace and Friendship served to settle some long-standing issues following the Pacific War. Under terms of this treaty, Chile was granted all

territories taken in the war, and Peru retained the city of Tacna in the north. This settlement divided a portion of southern Peru and embittered this country. To this day, some Peruvian citizens, influenced by their popular culture and educational system, remain hostile toward Chile.

Peru indeed suffered substantial losses in the Pacific war. Peru lost the territory of Tarapaca, including the port of Arica, thereby denying the Peruvian city of Tacna access to the Pacific. In essence, Peru lost access to the South American nucleus of access to the Pacific Ocean. Arica is strategically located as the closest Pacific Port to the Atlantic. Further, the area around Tacna and Arica is rich in mineral resources. Mining for copper, silver, salt, aluminum sulfate, guano, and saltpeter has bolstered the regional economy for decades, along with other small-scale mining activities.

Until the 1980s, the 1929 treaty served to overcome traditional tensions and distrust, fostering considerable regional stability. During these five decades, Chile and Peru joined in several agreements: the Act of Surrender of Tacna to Peru (28 August 1929), a border agreement (5 August 1930), a border transit agreement (13 December 1930), a goods and luggage transport agreement (31 December 1930), and an agreement to erect a monument on the Hill of Arica (21 November 1933).

In 1951, the two governments launched technical negotiations to implement unsettled clauses in Article five of the 1929 treaty. Between 1965 and 1986, the Peruvian government approved construction of a pier and railway terminal in Arica. Likewise, in 1947 Chile claimed territorial rights to 200 maritime miles.

Problems arose when a 1985 Peruvian legislative act directed that the Peruvian pier in Arica would be managed by a Peruvian port authority, who would cooperate with Chilean officials. When political groups in both countries opposed this agreement, the act was never implemented. However, this issue promoted foreign ministers of both countries to initiate dialogue in an effort to improve relations between the countries. This effort led to the 13 November 1999 Act of Performance, designed to resolve outstanding issues identified in the 1929 treaty and to finally settle differences arising from the Pacific War.

The 1999 diplomatic initiative triggered an era of cooperation and good will. Since it was not a formal agreement, it was not subject to legislative confirmation. Under terms of the agreement and in deference to the Treaty of 1929, Chile agreed to construction of a Peruvian pier, customs house, and railway terminal in Arica, to be administered by Peru. Likewise, Peru would be able to move goods and passengers freely over a railway from Tacna to Arica. In all other matters in the region, Chilean law would prevail.

Chile's contributions to this international agreement improved the country's standing in the global community. Peaceful resolution of this conflict has allowed the two quarrelling countries to enjoy the benefits of one of the largest and most dynamic economic zones in the world.

Since the 1980s, Chile has been a leader in Asian-Pacific economic policy, a fact evident in Chile's selection as the first Latin American member of APEC. As South America's "gate to the Pacific", Chile enjoys a great strategic advantage. Peru also seeks admission to APEC, arguing that it too, as a "hinged country," strategically connects with Asian-Pacific countries by integrating politically and commercially with the Andean nations and those of Mercosur.

In November 2000, Chile and Peru entered into a military pact which was accepted by both foreign ministers in November 2003. In this same year, the first bilateral meeting of the two nations' Chiefs of Staff took place in Santiago, Chile, signaling a continuation of a 13 September 2001 bilateral accord to destroy large quantities of anti-personnel mines held by both armies. This joint effort complied with international agreements. More importantly, it signaled that the two troubled neighbors were willing to settle their differences diplomatically, rather than militarily.

#### **THREATS TO CHILE'S NATIONAL STRATEGY**

National security begins with a careful identification of threats. Some threats are rooted in historical relationships with other nations, often exacerbated by jingoistic patriotism. But current threats to Chile result from current complex realities, especially the fact that Chile's territorial integrity has been repeatedly challenged in the past four decades.

These threats have caused persistent tension for Chilean citizens, and they have necessitated mobilization of Chile's armed forces. In 1964, conflicting claims to the Lauca River's water rights led to mobilization of Bolivian forces. Thus in 1974 Peru aggressively sought to reclaim Arica. Likewise, in 1978 Argentina rejected arbitration over rights to the Beagle Canal and prepared for war. In each of these disputes, Chile had no recourse but to prepare for war.

Also, internal instability in neighboring countries poses a threat to Chile. In order to gain domestic solidarity, beleaguered leaders sometime seek external conflict, as Argentina did in 1982 in precipitating the Falkland war. Likewise, Peru confronted Ecuador in the Mountain of Condor in 1994-1995 in order to divert attention from internal issues. The Treaty of Brasilia in 1998 terminated the territorial dispute between Peru and Ecuador.

Chile cannot afford to overlook these on-going volatile regional problems. The time may come when such issues lead quickly to armed conflict. Chilean leaders would be derelict if they

failed to prepare for armed conflicts they hope do not occur. Such preparation begins with a careful assessment of current threats.

## WITH ARGENTINA

Chile and Argentina have never engaged in armed conflict. But the crises of 1978 and 1982 could have led to war. However, Papal mediation averted armed conflict. Yet critical issues persist between the two nations.

## DOMINION OVER THE SOUTH OF THE CONTINENT

Despite its huge national debt and struggling economy, Argentina vies with Brazil for regional hegemony. Accordingly, Argentina is seeking strategic advantage by attempting to control southern channels and access to Antarctica. Indeed, the Falklands war was waged to deny the United Kingdom's claim in this strategic location. Had Argentina won this war, surely her next objective would have been southern Chile.

## ACCESS TO ANTARCTICA

Antarctica's current primary strategic value is as a source of water. Since 1904, Argentina has maintained a permanent presence in Antarctica, claiming territory located between 25° and 73° W, whereas Chile claims territory located between 53° and 90° W.

Argentina asserts that its Antarctic claims are sovereign, in accord with the Antarctica Treaty. However, 21° of territory remain contested by Chile and Argentina. In effect Chile rivals Argentina for control of the south and for claims to Antarctica.



FIGURE 1. CHILEAN TERRITORY LOCATED BETWEEN 53° AND 90° W.<sup>7</sup>



FIGURE 2. ARGENTINEAN TERRITORY LOCATED BETWEEN 25° AND 74° W.<sup>8</sup>

### NATIONAL ANTIPATHIES

Chileans and Argentines share a mutual dislike for one another, creating a psychological barrier between the neighboring countries. Argentinean visitors to Chile persistently exhibit an attitude of superiority. They regard Chileans as illiterate, timid, unimaginative, and under-sized. In the unfortunate event of war, Chile may benefit as the underdog who has been grossly underestimated by the enemy. A better alternative, however, would be a greater Argentinean appreciation of their trans-Andean neighbors. Unfortunately, we know too well that a sense of national superiority can hasten armed conflict with a supposedly inferior nation.

### WITH BOLIVIA

As with Peru, a new administration in Bolivia has heightened tensions between Chile and Bolivia. President Carlos Mesa has renewed Bolivia's relentless efforts to regain sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, which Bolivia lost in the Pacific War (1879-1884). Chile and Bolivia do not carry on diplomacy at the ambassadorial level, although they maintain consulates to transact necessary business. President Mesa has nonetheless publicly called for negotiations on Bolivia's quest for sea access. Likewise, Bolivia joined Chile in renouncing use of land mines at the Land Mine Conference in Canada.

## ACCESS TO THE PACIFIC

Since losing access to the Pacific in the Pacific War, Bolivia has persistently threatened to renew the conflict to regain coastal lands. This issue remains unresolved, despite President Mesa's persistent pleas to internationalize the rail line from Bolivia to the Chilean coast.

## RIGHTS TO NATURAL RESOURCE

Bolivia's wealth of natural gas is now a contentious issue because militant Bolivians do not want Chile to benefit in any way from Bolivian gas. They do not want it exported to Chile or transported through Chilean territory or ports. They do not want Chile to obtain it from a third party. In effect, they are negating the possibility that a healthy trade relationship with Chile could, in time, reduce the animosity that currently divides the neighboring countries.

## RIGHTS TO LAUCA RIVER WATERS

Even though Chile has enjoyed access to Lauca River waters for irrigation since 1962, Bolivia continues to contest this Chilean water right. Prior to the Pacific War, the Bolivian province of Oruro owned the Lauca River. Following the war, it was declared an international river. Its source is in Chile's Parinacota Mountains, from whence it flows through the Andes and into Bolivian Lake Coipasa. As an international waterway, it is legally available to Chile – a situation that Bolivia will not accept.

## SEAPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS ROUTES

Under the Treaty of 1904, Bolivia is entitled to certain tax-exempt uses of Chile's highways and ports. Chile has offered Bolivia free access to its highways and ports to expedite exportation of Bolivia's gas to Mexico and North America. Chile's President Lagos likewise invited Bolivia to construct a plant in Chile to facilitate gas production at no cost for the site. When Bolivia failed to take advantage of these offers, the U.S. Company Semptra Energy decided not to purchase Bolivian gas, choosing an Indonesian supplier instead. Because the Bolivian government declined access freely granted by Chile, the Bolivian state treasury is losing approximately \$ 400 million annually.

## NATIONAL ANTIPATHIES

Bolivia's historic loss of access to the Pacific has fueled hostility toward Chile for over a century. Indeed the Bolivian Constitution asserts Bolivia's right to the sea. The Bolivian educational system and press continually portray Chile as the villainous denier of a basic Bolivian right. In short, Chile has become Bolivia's eternal enemy. All candidates for high political offices in Bolivia must proclaim their determination to reclaim their nation's God-given



right to the sea. In effect, a single maritime issue perpetually divides Chile and Bolivia. And Chile's efforts to alleviate Bolivia's land-locked predicament have fallen on deaf ears.

#### **WITH PERU**

Peru maintains a series of claims that are challenged by Chile. So far these issues have not led to armed conflict. Nonetheless, the issues persist.

#### **MARITIME RIGHTS**

Borders and maritime boundaries between Peru and Chile were clearly established in the Treaty of 1929. However, Peru has been attempting to assert Pacific maritime rights that exceed those set by the treaty. Chile opposes this extension. The dispute was exacerbated in 2001 when a group of ultra-nationalist Peruvian reservists crossed the international boundary and approached a Chilean observation post within 40 meters of the frontier.

#### **RECOVERY OF ARICA HARBOR**

Peru seeks to regain control of the Arica Harbor, lost to Chile in the Pacific War. This issue fosters anti-Chilean attitudes in Peru and frustrates bilateral cooperation.

#### **CHILEAN INVESTMENTS IN PERU**

Chile's recent economic prosperity has led to considerable investment of Chilean capital in Peru, as well as establishment of Chilean businesses in Peru. These commercial relations have caused some internal problems in Peru and aroused more anti-Chilean feeling.

Also, Chile's economy is attracting Peruvian job-seekers, so massive Peruvian immigration could pose social and economic problems for Chile. Likewise, the flow of investment – perhaps insufficiently regulated – is leading to some corruption. For example, the Peruvian corporation Aerocontinente has been charged with money laundering in Chile. Likewise, the Chilean corporation Lucchetti has been accused of illegal connections with the Fujimori government, especially his intelligence advisor Vladimir Montecinos. But underlying these recent problems are the perennial issues of territorial and boundary dispute. Overall, Chilean – Peruvian relations are somewhat volatile.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Interstate conflicts in South America have been reduced in recent years. Yet they have not disappeared, and their potential looms over the region. Territorial issues continue to fester among Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru. At any time, one of these issues could lead to war between some, or perhaps all, of these nations.

Further, non-conventional threats, especially terrorism, must be analyzed and evaluated. These trans-national threats can affect several states simultaneously, and they can cause conflicts between states—especially when one state accuses another of harboring or supporting such a threat. Military leaders must be prepared to give national leaders their best advice regarding threats; they must as well remain prepared to respond operationally when they are called to do so.

The foregoing analysis reveals that Chile currently faces the threat of conflict with any of its three neighbors. Despite considerable regional cooperation and integration, each nation is dedicated to protecting its own interests. When a nation is directly threatened, it may resort to armed force to protect its interest – a right guaranteed by the United Nations.

Indeed the fast pace and radical changes brought about by globalization and modern technology have increased tensions in some cases. Chile has managed to undergo positive political, social, and economic changes in recent years – all without experiencing undue internal or external problems. Even so, as we have seen with Chilean investments in Peru, this new-found dynamism has created new tensions. Economic growth, democratization, social mobility – these modernist phenomena do not necessarily guarantee national security. But they do assure that national security issues become more complex.

As the nation changes, so does its military. Technologically advanced nations tend to field high-tech armed forces. Prospering nations are often prompted to invest in more lethal and sophisticated weapons, which themselves may destabilize the region, obliging less prosperous neighbors to engage in an unwanted and unaffordable arms race. So for the time being, Latin American countries in the post-Cold War era will continue to rely on their military forces to maintain national security when all else fails to do so.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVING CHILE'S NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Observe all internationally sanctioned treaties and agreements.
- Obey international law which preserves historic traditions and legitimizes prior decisions
- Promote peace as a national objective and as a regional ideal.
- Promote mutual measures of confidence in dealings with all nations, especially neighboring countries.
- Validate Chile's sovereignty and national integrity through active political, diplomatic, and economic participation in global affairs.

- Seek international legitimacy for all Chilean territorial claims.
- Rely on U.N. preventive diplomacy to prevent local controversies from becoming destabilizing regional armed conflicts.
- Pursue regional security through bilateral and multilateral agreements designed to prevent or peacefully resolve conflicts

#### MILITARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate with national leaders to prevent conflict and secure the peace by all reasonable means
- Maintain a well-trained and well-equipped military force to be used only as a last resort to defend the nation and protect its interests.
- Refrain from using military force in situations where police forces are more appropriate; military force should be reserved for countering external aggression.
- Support professional military education to assume a well-led armed force and a source of reliable strategic advice to national leaders.
- Promote mutual confidence measures among regional armies so that they may enhance international relations and work together to secure the peace.

Soldiers know better than any others that war is, first of all, a social phenomenon with a history as old as the human race. Soldiers are also most aware of war's destructiveness and lethality. Soldiers must fight, endure, and suffer the consequences of war. But politicians start and end wars, often on their own terms. This analysis of threats confronting my beloved nation of Chile is offered in the spirit of giving my leaders the best advice on how to avoid war. It is also offered in the knowledge that, in the event of war, its author will have no choice but to do his best to serve his nation honorably and victoriously.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 81-82.

<sup>2</sup> Donald E. Nuechterlein, "Defining U.S. National Interests: An Analytical Framework", in *War, National Security Policy & Strategy*, Course 2 Directive. Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2004, pp. 93-115.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of National Defense of Chile, *Book of the National Defense of Chile*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Santiago, May 2003, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Colin S. Gray, "Thinking Asymmetrically in Times of Terror", *Parameters* 32, Spring 2002, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> James T. Hill, "Testimony of General James T. Hill United States Army Commander United States Southern Command Before the House Armed Services Committee United States House of Representatives", March 24, 2004, in International Fellows Field Study, U.S. Army War College, Academic Year 2005.

<sup>6</sup> This river originates in Chilean territory. After 75 kilometers in Chile, it passes through the Bolivian frontier into the Coipasa Lake.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of National Defense of Chile, *Book of the National Defense of Chile*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Santiago, May 2003, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> Argentinean Map. Available from <<http://www.ushuaia.com.ar/infored/pol/federal/tdf.htm>>. Internet. Accessed 30 October 2004.



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